

USE AND EXPLANATION OF SOIL INTERPRETATIONS

GENERAL

Soil interpretations are generated from a software program called NASIS (National Soil Information System) (1) (2). NASIS uses soil properties to generate interpretations for specified land uses and specified management practices. Criteria used to generate soil interpretations can be viewed in the National Soil Survey Manual (3). Soil survey interpretations allow users of soil surveys to plan reasonable alternatives for the use and management of soils. They are used to plan both broad categories of land use, such as cropland, pastureland, woodland, or urban development, as well as specific elements of those land uses; for example, equipment use in woodland management, or septic tank absorption fields.

When soil interpretations are used in connection with delineated soil areas on soil maps, the information pertains to the soil for which the soil area is named. Other soils that are in areas too small to map may occur within the delineated area. The interpretations do not apply to the included soils.

More detailed studies are required if small, specific sites are to be developed or used within a given soil delineation. For example, a soil delineation bearing the name Chagrin silt loam can include small, unmappable areas of other soils, such

as Lobdell and Holly soils. The interpretations apply to the Chagrin part of the delineated soil area and not to the included soils.

Soil interpretations will not eliminate the need for on-site study and testing of specific sites for the design and construction for specific uses. They can be used as a guide to planning more detailed investigations and for avoiding undesirable sites for an intended use. The soil map and interpretations can be used to select sites that have the least limitations for an intended use. No consideration was given in these interpretations to the size and shape of soil delineation's nor to the pattern they form with other soils on the landscape. For example, some very desirable soil areas are too small, too irregular in shape, or occur with less desirable soils in a pattern too complex for the intended use. Although not considered in the interpretations, these items may influence the final selection of a site.

REFERENCES

- (1) National Soil Information System – version 4.1. NRCS
- (2) <http://nasis.nrcs.usda.gov>
- (3) National Soil Survey Handbook – section 620. NRCS